THE CHURCH MONTHLY

Volume 6 JUNE, 1932 *Number 8*

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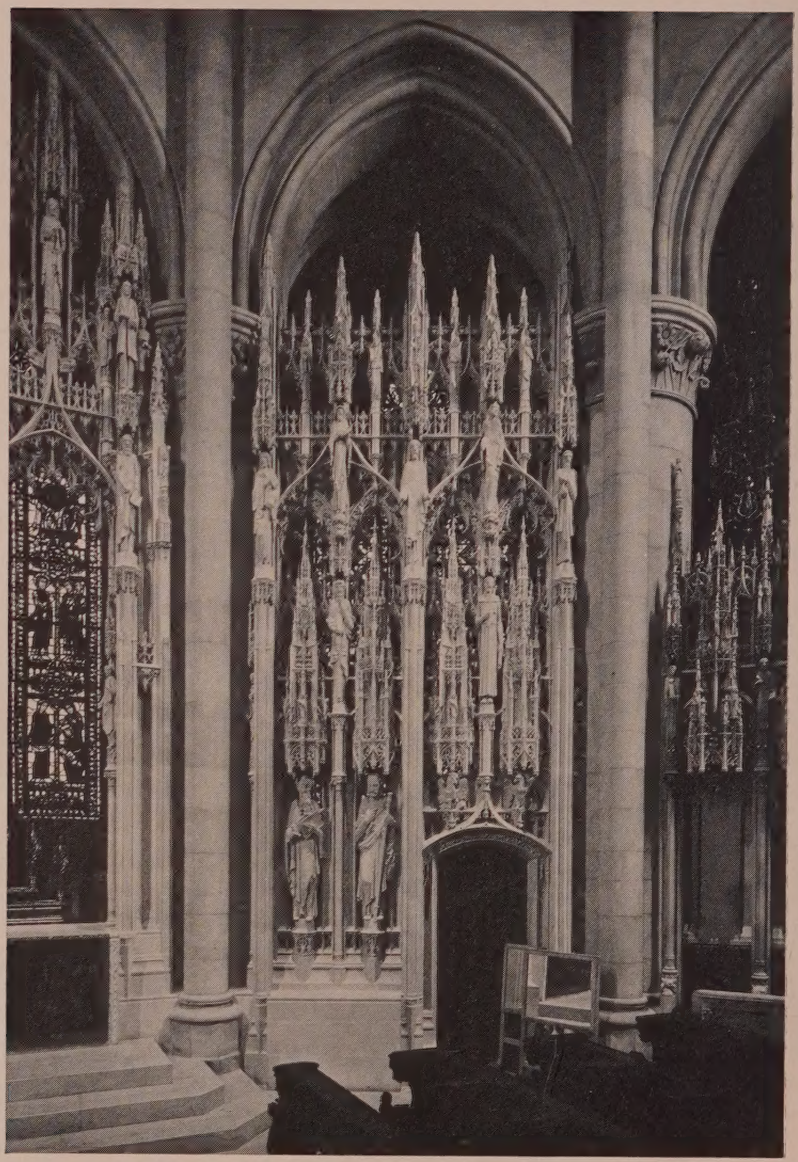

Detail of the Chancel Screen
The Missionaries' Panel

THE CHURCH MONTHLY

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The Power of Imagination

By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

THIS is the first Sunday in the Lenten season, traditionally utilized by the church for the purpose of penitence. Now, penitence is not always a desirable frame of mind. One can morbidly moon over one's sins until it is far better to catch the healthy spirit of Paul, saying, "Forgetting the things which are behind . . . I press on." Wide areas of the church's penitential literature, therefore, seem to some of us distinctly unhealthy.

Once in a while, however, one does come across a confession of failure with an edge on it which cuts clean through to reality. Some of you will remember in George Bernard Shaw's drama, Saint Joan, Cauchon's summary of the whole appalling business that led up to the martyrdom of the Maid: "Must then a Christ perish in torment in every age to save those that have no imagination?"

This sermon springs from the conviction that most of our catastrophes come from the failure of imagination. "Son of man," cried Ezekiel, "hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery?"

Even a casual glance reveals how deeply imagination is concerned in daily life. My friend was struck blind at the climax of her years. I wondered how I could comfort her and came back comforted instead, for what she said was, "I am in a bunker. Now watch me use my niblick. It is a good one—faith." See what she did in the chambers of her imagery, as though to say, Come, let us use our creative imagination on this situation and find out what we can make of it. And in consequence her next decade, though it was spent in blindness, was the most useful of her long career. The way we handle any situation depends largely on the way we picture it to ourselves.

As for religion, imagination goes to the very pith of that, for merely to believe something is futile if we do not make it real to our imagination. So Milton theoretically believed the new Copernican astronomy that had just come in, but in writing Paradise Lost he employed for the framework of his poem the old Ptolemaic astronomy of the central and stationary earth. That is to say, he theoretically believed one thing but another thing was still capturing his imagination. Well, multitudes of so-called Christians believe this or that formal creed, acquired or inherited, while another view of life altogether has captured their imagination, and it is always *that* and not their theoretical belief which controls their lives.

You see, we too commonly think of imagination in terms of fancy, of whimsical caprice and pleasing illusion. We say with Shakespere:

> "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
> Are of imagination all compact."

We think that imagination is a plaything. Well, to be sure, one can play with it. Here in this teeming city one can imagine oneself in the spacious solitudes of nature and find rest, or tired with work can mount

the magic carpet of a book and flee to kindlier realms. One can play with this tremendous power of the imagination, but that is not half the truth. "Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery?"

For one thing, our basic morality depends upon imagination. We all render lip service, for example, to the Golden Rule. It would be difficult to find a man in such moral rags and tatters that he would not consent to the soundness of the Golden Rule. But the practice of it involves a difficult and all too uncommon use of the imagination. Consider. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." The practice of that means that a man imaginatively must put himself in other people's places and see the situation with their eyes. If we did so use our imaginations to put ourselves in other people's places, as is involved in the Golden Rule, there would be less trouble in this world. Fewer families would be estranged by misunderstanding between the older and the younger generation if we imaginatively put ourselves in one another's places. Fewer bitter judgments and tales of unkind gossip would pass our lips if we put ourselves in the other person's place. Fewer racial, national, and class prejudices would stain our lives if first imaginatively we saw ourselves in the other person's situation.

You see, this Golden Rule has been too superficially interpreted. We Christians are sometimes called sentimentalists because we exalt love as the queen of the virtues, whereas love, they say, applies only to those near and dear to us, and in wide areas of our experience does not apply at all, but justice, fair play, the Golden Rule apply. That sounds plausible, doesn't it? Could coaches at a football game say to the players, Young gentlemen, you must all love one another? They could say, however, Young gentlemen, we will have fair play in this game and you will take no advantage for yourself that you are unwilling your opponents should have in the same situation; we will practise the Golden Rule.

Or could a moralist go to business men in the rough and tumble of competitive commerce and say, You must all love one another? A man often does not know his business rival, much less love him. What the moralist could say, however, is, Business should be fair play, each treating the other as he would consider it fair to be treated. So, they say, not love but justice, sportmanship, fair play, the Golden Rule is the law of life.

Very well, I am willing to begin there. But, my friends, consider the use of the imagination that is involved in doing this and when once you start with imagination's use how far it carries you! If for fifteen minutes every day all capitalists should imagine themselves in the places of the laboring men and all laboring men should imagine themselves in the places of the capitalists, I suspect our industrial relationships would begin to change as though a new climate had come for them to grow in. If for fifteen minutes every day all white men should imagine themselves in the colored man's place and all colored men imagine themselves in the white man's place, our racial relationships would suddenly begin to improve. You see, this Golden Rule is not so simple as it looks.

It was said of Robert Browning that he was born with a passion for living in other people's experiences. Rabbi Ben Ezra, Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea Del Sarto, Bishop Blougram, the characters of the Ring and the Book—into how many other lives Browning put himself, saw their points of view, thought their thoughts, said what they would have said!

Well, when what Browning did for art's sake is done for life's sake the results are marvelous. Jesus, we say, lived the kind of life he did because he loved people. Yes, but the very core of Jesus' love was imagination. He imaginatively saw the prodigal's problem from within. He imaginatively felt upon his own body the wounds of the

victim whom the Good Samaritan helped. He put himself in the place of the widow when she dropped her meager gift into the treasury. He became blind Bartimæus when the cry came from the roadside. And even the woman taken in adultery—his imagination made her problem his very own.

Mark this! All egotism springs from a mean imagination and all altruism has for its fountainhead the capacity to put oneself into other people's places.

If now, someone says, Well, tell us how to get imagination, I answer, We all have it already. Every one of us all the time is doing something in the chambers of his imagery. No capacity is more universally possessed in some degree or more constantly used but lo! what we do with it! Seest thou what we do in the dark, each man in the chambers of his imagery?

Walk through another gateway in this truth and move out in another realm. All social progress depends on imagination. Imagination a plaything, a caprice, a whimsy, a phantasy? Upon the contrary, it is the indispensable element in all creative activity from writing a lyric to building a business. We are living in a world today where our external circumstances depend on the fact that once somebody began imagining Bessemer steel and combustion engines and harnessed electric energy, imagining airplanes sailing the skies and words racing the highways of the wind. Everything that man creatively does starts somewhere in the chambers of our imagination.

The more one ponders this the more one wonders that it is not better recognized. I do not recall that I ever heard a sermon on the imagination. On doctrine and duty, yes. On personal character and social service, yes. But none of these has any force save as it starts from and is real to and ultimately captures the imagination.

I believe that the Maine coast is beautiful but that is not half the story. The Maine coast has gotten into my imagination. Here amid the terrific artificiality of this metropolis I know what Wordsworth meant:

"How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!"

A man loves his family. Yes, but love by itself may mean much or little. What matters is that family, deeply loved, gets into one's imagination.

". . . And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two."

When, now, one turns from these personal relationships to public matters like Christian unity or civic decency or world peace, how deeply they depend on what we are doing in the chambers of our imagery!

How, for example, are we thinking of this church now that we have gotten ourselves established for a year and a half in our new home? A large and successful institution, adequately equipped and now to be efficiently run—is that the picture? But Jesus of Nazareth never would have thought of any institution supposed to represent him with that image in the center of his thinking. A fellowship of Christian men and women vitally producing Christian character and overflowing in world-wide service—something like that would have been in the center of his imagination. To have boys and girls and men and women find Christ here, oh, not conventionally but vitally, so that lives are transformed and characters changed and careers modified and problems solved and new spirit released into this generation's needy life—we are an utter failure without that, no matter how large and successful an institution we may seem to be. My friends, never let your ministers, amid these multitudinous details, running an institution, burdened in days like these with budgets, forget that picture which Christ would have in his mind, and pray we never let you forget.

I love this Gothic beauty and all the

opportunity of service that rises up about this church, but it is nothing except as we, humble, humane-hearted Christian people help ourselves and others to genuinely Christian life. Keep that picture in the center of your imagination. Never let it fade.

You see, imagination is socially creative. Indeed, I think that more than half the trouble with our whole peace movement is that we have moved out into a brand-new world and that the popular imagination is still lagging behind in the old world. Once each nation was isolated. Once each nation could subsist upon its own products. Once war could be fought with professional armies only and weapons were crude and with limited effect, so that once a nation could win a war and come back loaded with the loot. That was the old world and the imaginations of multitudes still are twining around that trellis. Like Milton, we have moved out into a new kind of cosmos but the old cosmos still captures our imagination. For in this new world no nation is isolated. Where is America? Our citizens are everywhere. Our property is everywhere. Our material and spiritual interests are woven like threads into the general fabric of the whole world's life so that wherever that fabric is violently torn, as at Shanghai, our threads are torn too. That is the new world and in this new world the weapons have changed from a poisoned arrow that could hit one to poison gas that can slay millions, so that never again will a great war be fought by professional armies against professional armies only but always hereafter wars will fall, as at Shanghai, upon the great masses of urban population. That is the new world. So in this new world no nation can ever really win a war and in any future war we will be sawing off the limb we are sitting on, cutting off our nose to spite our face, blowing up our own homes to get rid of the rats, making complete fools of ourselves, that is, and in the end committing mutual economic suicide. That is the new world but the popular imagination still clings to the old world.

There are many things that the Christian church cannot do about this matter of peace and war, but if the church were in deadly earnest it could do one thing: help bring the popular imagination up to date on the murderous folly of war in this new world. For imagination is seriously creative.

Oh, it is glorious fun too. One can play with it. As a friend of mine says, "The difference between the man who lacks imagination and the man who has it is like the difference between a planet which has no atmosphere and a planet which does have an atmosphere; in the one case, every meteorite that rushes toward it out of the infinite hits as a solid chunk, and in the other case it bursts into a shower of stars." It is glorious to have a vivid imagination. But that is not half the story. Seest thou what we do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?

Pass through just one more door in this truth and out into one more field for a moment. Upon our imagination depends our interior spiritual companionships. In one of O. Henry's stories a girl is kept steady through difficult temptation by a picture of Kitchener. "She knew," says O. Henry, "that General Kitchener was away over in Japan, leading his army against the savage Turks," but he had a stern face—you remember that chiseled, disciplined face—and, looking at her from the gilt frame on her dresser, he kept her steady. Stronger than the preachments of her friends or the prohibitions of her ethical code, he captured her imagination.

Well, that is true to life. The most powerful influences that play upon us come from things and, most of all, from persons who have captured our imaginations. In the family that is true. We all know that. In the nation, Washington and Lincoln, being dead, yet speak, wielding incalculable power because they have captured the national imagination. And as for Christianity, after centuries of changing theologies,

shifting moral customs, the rise and fall of many churches, one thing persists, the most powerful single influence that ever invaded the spiritual life of the Western world, a Personality who does capture the imagination.

My friends, if you are bringing up children, remember that their characters and their careers will inevitably follow their habitual imaginings. That is the desperate danger that lies in a lot of our present-day libidinous drama and literature. One of our professional writers (so we are told by a college president), having made his money turning out rotten books, was horrified to discover that his daughter was taking seriously what he had written and, throwing over her standards, was plunging in after the fashion of her father's books. That man said to her, "I never dreamed you'd take seriously what I've written. That was written to sell." So is most of it, and by as despicable a crew of public panderers as ever debauched the imaginations of a people. Similarly, our vulgar and sometimes unspeakably rotten movies get at the chambers of the public imagery, using the charming gateway of the eyes. As for certain areas of the public press, Dean Inge quotes the instructions given by an American editor to the authors of his staff. "Here," said the editor, "is a man and his wife and another man. Write about them, and let the shadow of the bed be on every page, but never let the bed appear." So these debauchers of the public understand their business. They go straight for the imagination.

On the other side, so did Jesus. He had only a few months in which to work. What was to be accomplished had to be swiftly done. He did not stop to argue. He went straight for the imagination. In matchless stories that mankind never can forget, in a ministry of service that haunts us yet, he captured the imagination, and when at last his enemies could endure him no more he carried a Cross up Calvary and so seized upon the imagination of the world that while mankind may indeed betray him mankind never can forget him. Nothing else in Christianity is half so powerful. Most of us have changed our theologies, our ideas of the church, our moral customs, but one thing has kept us still Christian. O my soul, what is Kitchener's face compared to His in the chambers of our imagery?

So this sermon walks up to each man's soul and must be finished in each man's conscience. What are we doing with our imagination?

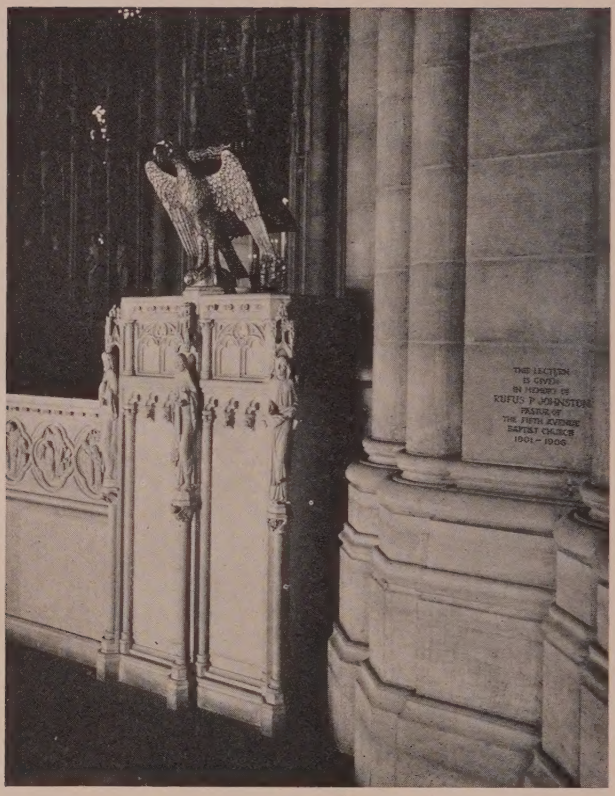
You are in trouble or temptation. How are you picturing yourself—as a helpless victim or as a soldier? You are throwing away the priceless opportunities of your youth and heading in for perverse and undisciplined living. I wish I could make you see yourself upon one of those California roads that start among the orange groves and eucalyptus trees and lead out at last, through the desert, to Death Valley. What will you do in the end thereof?

Or you are trying to live without religion and saying it does not matter. How, then, are you picturing this universe—as a raft aimlessly adrift upon the high seas of a meaningless chaos, coming from nowhere and going nowhither, or a ship with a captain and a goal? That does make a difference. Seest thou what we do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?

PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, what we have spoken about in words do Thou make real to us in the imaginations of our hearts, saying to us once again with the voice of ancient wisdom, As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. And grant that because we have worshiped together here life may be changed and careers modified and problems solved—in the Spirit of Christ. Amen.

Dr. Fosdick preached the foregoing sermon on February 14, 1932.



THE LECTERN

Given in Memory of Rufus P. Johnston, Pastor of the
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church—1901-1906

Prayer

By Harry Emerson Fosdick

ETERNAL Spirit, Creator of the universe, Maker of our bodies, Father of our spirits, we worship Thee. Far off from us Thou never art but by the insensitiveness of our own hearts we keep Thee distant. Grant unto us in this hour of opportunity the grace of receptiveness that into responsive souls we may receive Thee, Thou Spirit of goodness and beauty and truth. By many lovely intimations hast Thou revealed Thy presence to us—in great souls through whom Thou hast shined upon us, in the order, symmetry, and color of the world of nature, in the victories of light over darkness, of goodness over evil, of love over hate. Up these overflowing streams from Thy fountainhead we press in this hour of worship to find the Fountainhead itself.

Often have we brought to Thee our weaknesses, sins to be forgiven, fears to be allayed, anxieties to be overcome, discouragements to be driven out. Yet again with all our needs we come to Thee. Dry reservoirs, rain Thou upon them. Untuneful hearts, bring Thy music out of them. Leafless trees, let Thy springtime refresh them. But, above all, we pray this day that Thou wilt not simply relieve our weakness but lay hold upon our strength.

We bring Thee our minds. Fallible they are, yet are they the dignity of our human nature, God forgive us that we have so misused them! Spirit divine, with great work needing to be done in this world, lay hold upon some minds today that we may think better with Thee and for Thee to the enrichment of our human life and the bringing in of Thy Kingdom!

Lay hold upon our courage. We thank Thee for the high gift of daring. For all the bravery that human life exhibits, we are grateful. Forgive us our misuse of this elevated power. Lay Thy hand upon it. May we fight the good fight for righteousness and peace, for personal character and social welfare.

Lay Thy hands upon our goodwill. Forgive us that with such strength to heal the ills of human life, we use love so narrowly and poorly. Extend its domain, we beseech Thee. Enlarge its reach over the bitter boundaries that so often keep it in. Let no selfish prejudice hold it back. Grant us goodwill toward all sorts and conditions of men of every color, of every nation, of every creed.

Lay hold upon our faith, we beseech Thee. Creative and strong, see how we put faith in small and unworthy things. Lift our faith on high. May we believe afresh in Thee and in human possibilities upon this earth.

O God, so often have we come to Thee presenting our feebleness; today we come presenting such strength as is ours. Take it and use it as Thy graving tool to carve Thy will in this world. Cross the inner thresholds of our hearts. Comfort us in bereavement. Steady our spirits in sickness. Keep our hearts stable and steadfast in practical distress. Let not the anxieties of this world overwhelm us. Give us margins of reserve around our need and deep wells to draw our comfort from. And with such inner refreshment send us out to be soldiers of the common good. We pray in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

The Latchstring

"Now and Then." There came to our desk today the first issue of a magazine that is being published by the New York Chapter of the Japanese Student Christian Association. The masthead tells us that Grace K. Iijima is the editor and that the staff of the paper, officers of the New York Chapter of the Japanese Student Christian Association, and the Advisory Board contain many names that are not only familiar to us here at the Riverside Church but who are our very good friends.

We anticipate that if succeeding issues of "Now and Then" continue to carry articles of the same bright interest that characterize this particular number we will be under constant temptation to plagiarism. We are tempted right now to lift the page of verse by Mr. Charles Edey Fay and to purloin also some of the "Gleanings" which so charmingly reveal the attitude of our Japanese friends who have been here in America and who have now returned home. The following paragraph is a sample of what the readers of the Church Monthly may expect to find us picking up from time to time from the pages of "Now and Then":

"If Japan is alluring to you, how much more so is New York to me—with all its friends, all its busy streets, its cigar stores, and its 'five and tens'! At times I am just full of yearning to go back there. I think so often of the kind friends there, always full of good cheer for us lonely souls in New York."

We are particularly proud to find a block cut of the Riverside Church appearing in this very interesting paper.

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"Oriental Students." The Second Oriental Student Conference under the auspices of the Oriental Student Christian Federation of New York was held at Riverside Church, March 24, 1932, with an attendance of about 100—Oriental students and American friends. The general theme was "Foreign Missionary Enterprise Today."

Miss Caroline Porter contributes this report of the conference:

Dr. Warnshuis opened the program by a talk on "Trends in Foreign Missionary Policy and Program," and after Dr. P. S. Hsu, Professor of Philosophy, Yenching University, and President of the O. S. C. F. in New York City, had presented the topic and purpose of the conference, the conference split into three groups for informal discussions and ran over into the afternoon under the leadership of Mr. Y. Nakagami, Mr. B. C. Ishwordas and Mr. S. Y. Chang. Impressions received from the discussions were reported by Dr. Hsu and findings summarized by Mr. Keeny at the afternoon General Session under the chairmanship of Mr. P. C. Cuyugan.

In striking contrast to the First Oriental Student Conference with its topic "What Has America Done to the Foreign Student," this second conference emphasized the share foreign students could take in the world program of Christianity and their contribution to the missionary program. For this purpose a frank facing of many questions seemed inevitable: the social ideals of communism vs. the so-called "Christian" capitalistic practices, actually experienced where Oriental meets Occidental, as in business; the new possibility and growing need for larger delegating of responsibility by the missionaries and mission boards to the oriental students and workers who should also have increased recognition and more nearly equal social and financial rewards; on the part of the missionaries, a more understand-

ORIENTAL STUDENT CONFERENCE
THE RIVERSIDE CHURCH, March 24, 1932

ing attitude and an always consistent policy toward national aspirations; a more careful selection of missionary candidates so that only those of highest and most scientific training and ideals should be sent out; so that the old association of missionaries as a corollary of the unequal treaties might disappear and the missionary be one whose personality and radiant example was always the greatest inspiration in character training; the development of an indigenous Christian religion with one unified National Christian Church instead of the denominationally divided Christendom. On these points varying attitudes were frankly expressed in a spirit of friendship and good will.

Breaks in the program came at luncheon and dinner served at Riverside Church and through the recreational period in the late afternoon.

A brief devotional period under Miss Maria Kins helped to prepare for the climax of the day which came at the closing evening session in the deeply spiritual message of Dr. Basil Matthews on "Sharing in the World Program of Christianity." A brief survey of the dramatic and rapid changes which had made greater transformations in life during the last twenty years than written in the whole past of human history, politically, economically, and nationally and which had destroyed old cultural, artistic, ethical and religious values and standards, raised the question: "Is there any religion in the universe which can build the new order?" To this came the answer: "There is but one way out. All those people who pin their faith in our Lord must throw their whole lives into the hazard and give everything. Each people and each race must bring their own conception of Jesus and share it with all the rest, even as a group from India plans to go and show to England this summer what Christianity means in India. In this way, together, we may listen and heed and share and so get a new insight and vision of the many-sided Jesus as He really is." Following in thought the Good Friday services at that moment beginning in the Fiji Islands and continuing through China, Africa, North America, South America, we saw an unbroken chain around the world, Christians joining in the worship of the Lord who gave His life on the Cross; all in possession of the beliefs

and the power which inspired St. Paul—the one power which alone enables us to face toward the problem and bring in the time symbolized by the story of the Arab boy by the banks of a little stream in Palestine piping his music for his little sisters, his neighbors, his tribe, the listening foreigners, on a flute made from a gun barrel which had been used in the war. "Swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks." "We must go back," as Dr. Matthews said, "and find the beliefs and the power of St. Paul, born a Jew, a Roman citizen, speaking Greek, standing on the Hill of Mars and saying: 'God made of one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.' "

MEN'S "STEAK ROAST"—TIBBETTS BROOK PARK, MAY 14TH.

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"Outdoors." The men of the church find the summer months offering many opportunities for outdoor activities. These occasions are sponsored by the Men's Class but are open to all men of the congregation Saturday afternoon, May 14th, found a party of thirty-five leaving the church at 2:00 o'clock bound for Tibbetts Brook Park. The men arrived in groups by various routes, some on foot and some by automobile. It was billed as a "steak roast" but had as accompanying features an exciting seven-inning ball game and a thirty-minute thunder shower of proportions.

On June third an informal golf tournament was staged at the Sprain Lake golf course. Twenty-five men left the church between the hours of 2:00 and 3:00 o'clock and as they arrived were sent off in foursomes over the eighteen-hole course. At the check-up around the supper table, J. Howard Ardrey was disclosed as the low scorer and his name is the first to be inscribed on the cup which the good, bad and indifferent golfers had been battling for through the afternoon.

On Saturday, June 11th, a Standard Oil tugboat will pull away from the Battery

wharf with ninety or more men of the church bound for a trip up the Sound. Two hours will be spent "ashore" before the trip back to the city where the good ship "S.O." will dock in the early evening.

It is hoped that the men of the church and congregation will realize that an announcement of any of these recreational programs is a personal invitation to each man to go along. The summer days will find many groups continuing in the out of doors the fellowships and friendships which they have been enjoying in the church throughout the winter.

▽

Going to Sunday School by Elevator. The visitor who expects to look over the entire Sunday School of Riverside Church, New York City, on one Sunday will be disappointed. He will be told that an observer is expected to stay with one class for at least an hour and if possible for the whole three-hour session. If he should try to wander through the school without a guide, he would find himself courteously blocked by ushers or hopelessly lost amid a maze of stairways and elevators. But, if by magic he could peek into many rooms of the Riverside Church School on a Sunday morning, the survey would be most interesting and rewarding.

Parents and children as they enter the church proceed at once to the elevators. The various classes of the Sunday School are spread out among the twenty stories of the great tower. Little tots two and three years old step out on the eighth floor to spend three hours in a nursery school comparing favorably in equipment and leadership with the best of weekday nursery schools. Children of the older age groups make their way to their classrooms. Each room is a separate sound-proof unit with ample sunlight and a generous store of equipment. At the time set apart for worship the Primary children come down to a beautiful chapel on the main floor, while the members of the Junior and Junior High departments share an assembly room on the tenth floor.

As one looks into the classrooms through a panel in the middle of the door, he finds a variety of activities. Here the children are gathered in a circle listening to a story told by the teacher; there they are engaging in an animated discussion. In one room they sit around a table with open Bibles before them; in another they are modelling in clay, each with his own project. One group of Primary children is making tiny furniture for a house; another group is seriously discussing the hardships of families where the father has no work. A class of Juniors goes out for an hour to visit the museum of the Jewish Theological Seminary nearby, studying the queer Hebrew letters in which the Old Testament was written and seeing ancient copies of the Law. Another group spends a half hour in the main auditorium of the church, studying the details of one of the large stained glass windows. At a certain period the children of each department learn songs and hymns under the direction of a skilled teacher of music. The younger children have lunch and a brief period of physical recreation in the middle of the morning. Older groups dismiss as the hour for church service draws near.

Meanwhile many grown-ups have also been attending Sunday School. There are three classes for those who want to fit themselves more adequately for their responsibilities as parents. In these classes a visitor may overhear a lecture by an expert on children's diet, or a discussion on the psychology of adolescence, or a forum on meeting the questions children ask about God. In another room one will find a large men's class and on another floor a

group of older women are engaged in a discussion of religious experience. Far up on the twentieth floor meets a class of college men and women.

Parents who wish to enroll a child in the middle of the year will be told that there is already a waiting list and no more pupils can be accommodated at present. Those who figured that a capacity of 500 would be adequate underestimated the appeal of Riverside Church School to the families of the community.

Even a casual observer will realize that this is no "ideal" school, and no one is more conscious of unsolved problems than the staff of the Riverside Church School. In spite of a generous budget, there are problems of space and equipment. In spite of well-qualified teachers and a desire to utilize the best materials and methods, there are problems of curriculum and discipline. Children from privileged families are inclined to be sophisticated and to want their own way. Even three hours once a week seem woefully inadequate for influencing life vitally. But the visitor to Riverside Church School will come away with the impression that this is a school where old and young may face clearly real problems of life in the spirit of Christ, where one may find a rare combination of freedom in the search for truth and sincerity in the quest for spiritual reality.

PAUL M. LIMBERT.

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"Appreciation." "Madonna Blue" which appears in this issue of the MONTHLY is contributed by a British friend who expresses herself as highly appreciative of Dr. Fosdick's sermons and makes this manuscript available to us as a mark of her interest.

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New Yorkers All. Many years ago, we made our first trip to New York. Getting off the Boston boat in the morning, we were meandering uptown when at Madison Square we met a friend whom we knew had been in the city many years and whom we thought of as a part of the metropolis. He was whole-heartedly delighted to see us. He immediately invited himself to be a pilot for a few hours. We followed him—on foot—down Broadway to the Battery. We were given a chance to inspect the aquarium, admission free, and then we meandered most of the way back to our original meeting point. Before we left him, however, he borrowed $5.00, for which we have been waiting ever since. That was not a very encouraging introduction to New York City, but at least it made us philosophize concerning the ease with which one can be in a place and not be of it. Our friend had lived here a long time, but he was still a visitor, even as were we. But he had no intention of ever going anywhere else no matter how harshly the city might use him. He could not bear the thought of separating himself from the city even though the city had shown no disposition to take him unto itself.

Dr. Cornelius Woelfkin used to say in connection with the supposed importance of New York in the scheme of things, "It's great to be a New York preacher, particularly when you are away from home. The farther you are from the city, the more important you seem to be."

We hardly know why these particular incidents have occurred to us, unless it is that we have been thinking of a certain type of individual whom we find in the church now and then. If there is a big budget to be raised or a dread undertaking to carry forward, he strains and groans as though the whole burden were his, and yet no one can find that he personally is actually carrying any share of it. There are many thousands of people in the country today whom the

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Madonna Blue

By Marie Stuart

"I FOUND Him in the shining of the stars, I marked Him in the flowering of His fields . . ."—the Artist of artists, Whose Handwriting is Beauty, Who gilds the buttercup; Who devised the rose and golden splendour of the evening sky; Who set the dark shapes of trees against it, and hung a star in the deepening shadows above them! . . .

Is Blue His chosen color, I wonder? It is often spoken of as a "divine colour"; and He has given it to so many of the loveliest works of His hands: the sea; the sky by noon and the sky by night—"darkly, deeply, beautifully blue."

There is the blue of distant hills, the blue of the kingfisher's breast and the blue of shadows on snow; the eyes of a newly-born babe are blue.

There is the transparent blue, tinged with green; of the Rhone as it gushes out of Lake Geneva; the blue of Mont Blanc's sharp apex viewed from the heights of Nyon in the Canton de Vaud—an ethereal tip of blue tinged with violet; immobile in its solitary remoteness beyond slowly moving wisps of cloud.

In almost every picture of the Madonna and Child the robe is of blue, and the loveliest of the flowers that come in the month of May—or Mary—are blue also.

We say *blue* in a casual sort of way, without realizing the countless varieties of it, and the many divisions and sub-divisions, each of which should perhaps have a name of its own. There is the little speedwell's blue that always seems so joyful; the blue of the Bay of Naples—in the posters! There is the arresting blue of the wounded soldier's uniform, the smoky blue of the Air Force, the blue of Oxford and Harrow and the blue of Cambridge and Eton. There is the blue of Persian pottery and old Chinese glass; there is the blue of the gentian, the forget-me-not and the cornflower, and the regal blue of the big delphinium family—a blue often shot through with purple and mauve. There is the gentle blue of the harebell, and the hard blue of the lobelia.

But not everything that is described as blue fulfills its promise: I have known the "beautiful Blue Danube" when, alas! it was a muddy brown; and the famous Blue Train is blue only by reason of its destination— the Côte d'Azur.

There is the blue of the thrush's egg, so gay and sure of itself; the pale blue of the starling's egg, and that gloriously supreme blue without admixture, intense and dazzling, of the hedgesparrow's egg. There is the mystic blue of the sapphire that seems to suggest the deep notes of an organ, or the rich, low tones of the human voice; the cool, restful blue of lapis-lazuli; the burning blue of the turquoise that (again relating color to sound) always suggests the lyrical tones of a soprano voice, or the silvery notes of a flute.

* * *

Without the "divine colour" how very different, how unthinkably different, would be some of the old Masters! Think of Murillo's Madonna, for instance! Take blue from Titian's robes and mountains, and what would be left? Take blue from Poussin's skies, and the pictures, for all their fine drawing, would be ordinary. The Barbizon men used blue—the blue of the French labourer's jacket or a peasant woman's headdress—with fine effect. Cotman would have been lost without his cobalt. Blue is the life of Whistler's river nocturnes and his Valparaiso series. And what could be more lovely than the famous watercolour known as Turner's "Blue Righi"?

One never-to-be-forgotten day, some years

ago, when the month of May was merging into the fuller splendour of June, I came upon an unexpected blaze of blue, almost overwhelming in its suddenness and its beauty, while walking in the Isle of Wight. We had breasted the hill known as Five Barrows and were facing homewards when, coming out of a little fold of the hillside, we were suddenly lost in azure.

Below us was spread a carpet of bluebells, reaching away almost to the cliff's edge. A little wood of larches made soft shadows along one side of the chine, on the other was the flaming gold of gorse.

Beyond us the ocean, above us the cloudless blue of Heaven, within us an awed wonder.

"Every common bush is aflame with God," *but only he who sees takes off his shoes.* I thought of Linneus, who knelt down the first time he saw gorse in bloom. As for me—mine eyes were seeing the glory of the coming of the Lord, and the glory was—blue.

Our Summer Schedule

Dr. Fosdick is going to be in the pulpit here on Sunday mornings during the weeks that the Summer School is in session, as he was last year. This series of sermons will begin on Sunday, July 3, and continue through Sunday, August 7. There will be no afternoon services. The following preachers are scheduled for our morning services for the summer:

June 12—Rev. C. Wallace Petty, D.D., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

June 19—Rev. Charles W. Gilkey, D.D., Dean of the Chapel, University of Chicago.

June 26—Rev. Harold C. Phillips, D.D., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Cleveland.

July 3 to August 7—Dr. Fosdick.

August 14—Rev. Adam W. Burnet, D.D., pastor of Westbourne Church, Glasgow, Scotland.

August 21—Rev. James Gordon Gilkey, D.D., pastor of the South Congregational Church, Springfield, Mass.

August 28—Dr. Gilkey.

September 4—Rev. Charles R. Brown, D.D., Dean Emeritus of the Divinity School, Yale University.

September 11—Dr. Brown.

September 18—Dr. Brown.

September 25—Dr. Brown.

Mr. Hellstrom will be at the church each Sunday from June 19 to August 14 and will assist in the services. Dr. Carder will return to the city for August 21 and will be present regularly after that date.

On the five Sundays from July 10 to August 7, the Committee on Education has arranged for three classes to meet at 9.30 in the morning to be open to the public. These Sunday morning sessions are under the administrative responsibility of Mr. Hellstrom who will lead a class for men and women to meet on the fifteenth floor. Mrs. Katherine Willard Eddy will conduct a class for women on the ninth floor and Mr. Cecil E. Kite will lead a discussion group for men on the fourth floor. Registration in advance is not necessary, but those who expect to attend are asked to choose their class and to remain with the same group during the entire series.

The regular sessions of the Church School have been discontinued for the summer and will resume the first Sunday in October.

An American Project in the Near East

The College at Sofia

By Floyd H. Black

SINCE the close of the World War, a reorganization of mission work has been carried out in many countries. New conditions have arisen which demand new methods in philanthropic work. Some types of mission work have been abandoned altogether. Many mission stations have been closed. Some mission fields have been given up. In the general reorganization more emphasis has come to be placed upon medical or health work and upon education, both general and technical. Also cooperation has often been established between mission or philanthropic work and local institutions and governments. This cooperation between philanthropic work and local public authorities is one of the most valuable and hopeful elements in missionary efforts today, for it works toward the creation of international goodwill and understanding, without which permanent world peace cannot be attained.

Of these efforts at reorganization and cooperation, the American College of Sofia is a unique example. In 1860, the American Board of the Congregational Church opened mission stations in that area of the old Turkish Empire now known as Bulgaria. This work prospered and was fruitful. Through the publication work carried on by the missionaries, the dissemination of the Bible and other literature in the language of the people, by the founding of churches and the opening of schools, the mission exerted a profound influence upon the development of the modern Bulgarian state. Bulgaria became independent in 1878, the new constitution guaranteeing religious liberty to all citizens: Christian, Moslem and Jew. The Bulgarian people are by nature liberal and tolerant both in religion and politics. The mission schools established to educate workers for the mission rapidly outgrew their original purpose and became institutions for general education. They were recognized by the Bulgarian government as a unit in the national educational system.

At the close of the War, a general reorganization of mission work in Bulgaria was begun. The two schools representing the higher educational work of the Mission Board were consolidated to form a college comprising a school for boys and a school for girls under one administration but not strictly coeducational. A fine tract of land near Sofia was secured for a campus. A Board of American Trustees was founded in America to which the Mission transferred the properties and funds belonging to the schools. Thus in 1926 the American College of Sofia began its career as an independent American College, in Bulgaria. Since 1926, twenty-two buildings have been erected. The student body numbers approximately 450, of whom half are boys and half are girls. For many years the number of applicants has far exceeded the number of places available.

The primary purpose of the College is to train young men and young women for useful lives in their own country. It is a cooperative enterprise. The Bulgarian and English languages are employed on equal terms as the official language of instruction. All students on graduation use English almost as a native tongue. About one-half of the members of the faculty are Bulgarians and half are foreign, principally American. The State Department of Education cooperates

heartily with the College in all educational policies. The national parliament voted building materials to the value of $50,000 to the College as an aid in the construction of the new plant. Leading families in all parts of the country send their sons and daughters to be educated in the College. The College is the principal representative in Bulgaria of American philanthropy and of the American people. The College serves as a bond drawing the two peoples together in common understanding.

Although non-sectarian, the College is thoroughly Christian in purpose and in the daily life on the campus. Daily religious services are conducted, attended by all students. Instruction in religion is a part of the required course of study. Interest in religion is natural and normal. There is no interference by the state or public opinion in religious matters.

The courses of study are organized to correlate with the state system of education in such a way that students are not separated from the life of their communities and country. The standard of living in the College is simple and wholesome to correspond to the standards in the best Bulgarian homes. All students do a certain amount of physical work daily in the buildings or on the grounds. This helps keep the cost of living low and within reach of people of moderate means. The total fee paid by a student for one year is $160, which pays for room, board, laundry, tuition and text books. At present 75 per cent of the total expenses of the College are paid from local income.

Thus the College enjoys a unique opportunity among American colleges abroad. Its influence extends through the students and their families to every part of the national life of Bulgaria. It is influencing the public life of a nation of six million people. It is the chief representative of American Christian education among an industrious and progressive people living in the most strategic area in the Balkans.

The Latchstring

(*Continued from page* 420)

depression has greatly depressed, but who are actually better off now than they ever were before. If we could leave the groaning to those alone who have suffered definite loss, the chorus would diminish appreciably and the dimuendo hold a promise that well might become in turn a constructive contribution to the whole situation.

But still we have not gotten to our point. In a recent bulletin which came to our hand from a rather successful church down in Georgia, we find this very casual statement: "Our offering last Sunday amounted to $1,936.74." The members of Riverside Church can well afford to think that over. When pledges as well as cash contributions on the collection plates are taken into account, we do receive more than that particular sum per Sunday. The trouble with us here is, in large part, that we think our sums are so great when as a matter of fact they are not any greater than obtain in scores and hundreds of other churches over the country. This is certainly true on the per capita basis and is very largely true when you consider church for church. Easter Sunday of this year just past, a Negro church in Harlem received in cash on its collection plate in excess of $1,500 at one service. Its average collection every Sunday has to be in excess of $1,000 if that particular congregation is going to pay its current bills, and they pride themselves on always having paid their bills and on being out of debt at the present time. Yes, we have a big budget, but we are not the only church in the country that has. We do expect our people to support us in so far as they are able by their individual pledges and contributions. But we would like to have them realize that the necessity for the popular support of the church work by the congregation is not a unique situation. It ob-

tains everywhere in every denomination, in all types of churches. Please remember that when you give a dollar to a very large budget, you are giving just one hundred cents to that budget, no more no less, even as would be the case were you making your contribution of one dollar to the little church back home whose budget is only a fraction of ours.

For all of which we are simply saying that because we are in a big church does not necessarily mean that we individually are carrying a big burden or assuming a large share of the work and responsibility. We can if we will wander around in an institution like the Riverside Church much as our friend of the first paragraph had been wandering around this great city for many years. Or we can if we will use it for a background as our friend Dr. Woelfkin implied many preachers did when they were away from home. It costs something to live in New York, to be sure, and church work costs something in New York, too. But we haven't heard of any community in the country where people can live for nothing or where church work can be successfully carried on without expense.

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"Neighbors from Everywhere." The second Missionary Tea held on the ninth floor on Friday, April 29th, brought together about fifty missionaries from the following countries: Africa, Bulgaria, Burmah, China, Egypt, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Rhodesia, Siam, Syria and Jerusalem. Some even at the end of the year, to their surprise, found former friends of other furlough years studying in New York City, and rejoiced in the reunion. The informal hour gave opportunity to discuss mutual problems, past work, future hopes and plans, and strengthened and deepened the consciousness of a worldwide fellowship in united purpose and spiritual vision. Riverside Church, through these teas, hopes to extend to every missionary "Welcome Home" and "God Speed" and to express deep interest in all that concerns them wherever they may be.

One hundred women have been employed in the sewing room. They have earned $15,000 in wages; thousands of garments of all sorts have gone out of this "work shop" to the hospitals and charitable institutions of the city.

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Telephone Technique

The Riverside Church has stolen a leaf from the book of current business in connection with the Employment Service which we have been carrying on here at the church and at the downtown office of the State Employment Bureau during the past year and more.

To make 407 placements in the employment field in this particular year is an achievement which could not have come to pass except for the constant cooperation of Miss Preuss and her co-workers in the employment office and the additional cooperation of Miss Downs and her volunteers here at the church. Weekly appeals have appeared in the church calendar. THE CHURCH MONTHLY has also done what it could.

A highly interesting and valuable additional means of getting the desired jobs has been discovered in the use of the telephone. All of us have had the experience at one time or another of answering a telephone to discover that the voice on the other end was launching immediately into a sales talk designed to interest us in automobiles, sewing machines, house and lot, or whatever it might be. Taking our cue from this telephone salesmanship technique, one of our volunteers has spent many hours day after day calling up people throughout the city and attempting to sell to them the opportunity of employing one or more of our applicants. This rigidly hard job calling for long hours day after day was carried on with a wise understanding of human nature, enthusiasm for the work and apparently endless tact and resourcefulness, to the very great advantage of the whole employment problem.

We recommend to other churches and organizations who are attempting to get jobs for people that they copy this technique of telephone salesmanship. We gladly pass on the technique without charge, but the technician we consider to be priceless in this particular situation and are trusting she may show us the way in connection with other similar opportunities.